www.kstatecollegian.com | Friday, November 4, 2011 | K-State vs. Oklahoma State University

Offense to regroup after disappointing second half

Coming off its first loss of the season, a game where it failed to score in the second half, the K-State offense is looking to rebound against the No. 3 Oklahoma State Cowboys this weekend in Stillwater,

Last week, the Wildcats took a 17-14 lead over the Oklahoma Sooners midway through the second quarter off a two-yard touchdown run from quarterback Collin Klein. The score set the crowd at Bill Snyder Family Stadium into pandemonium and it appeared that K-State had all of the momentum.

They never scored again in the game.

'It was very frustrating, but at the same time, there were a lot of us that did not do our jobs," said wide receiver Tyler Lockett after the game. "We just have to be focused for next

Next week has now arrived, and the Wildcats' offense is looking to gear up for a rebound performance against the Cowboys, whose defensive unit is far less talented than the Sooners' according to the num-

"I think what our team has to prove is what we expect of our team - to get better week in and week out and that did not happen last week," said head coach Bill Snyder. "We have to prove to ourselves that we are able to do that. That is what we are working on right now."

The Wildcats will have an opportunity to show their stuff on Saturday against the Cowboys, who are ranked 111th in total defense. One added benefit the Wildcats will look to take advantage of is the fact that, contrary to the Sooners, the Cowboys' weakness on defense is their run defense, which allows 185.5 rushing yards per game. That ranks 84th in the country amongst Football Bowl Subdivision teams.

"That is always our game plan," said center B.J. Finney about the offense's plan to run the ball. "The Oklahoma State defense is a good defense, and team, so we are going to have



K-State junior receiver Chris Harper attempts to catch a touchdown pass in the corner of the end zone during Saturday's 58-17 defeat to the Oklahoma Sooners. The Wildcats did not score the entire second half.

to come out and stick to what we do in order for us to win this

One key factor that will play a major role in the game is possession time. With Brandon Weeden and Justin Blackmon putting up gaudy numbers this season, the Wildcats will look to do the best thing they possibly can to contain them, and this is to keep them off the field entirely as long as they can.

"Time of possession is gi they are a really good football to accomplish what you are team, so we are going to have trying to accomplish," Snyder said. "You have to get the ball in the end zone. If you can hold on to it for a year and a half and not put points on the board, it is of no real value to you. You are playing against teams that score so quickly. They get a point a minute, so to speak. You are going to have possession time, whether you like it or not, you are probably going to have possession time against teams that move and score so quickly and are efficient with

what they do." While the schematics of the game are certainly important, one of the main goals of the offense this week is to simply get back on track after last week's loss to the Sooners.

"We are all taking it pretty heavily to come back and put out a good performance like we did not do on Saturday and just

play well," Finney said.

As a result of the loss last week, many of the critics from the preseason that criticized Wildcats came back in full force, discussing the weaknesses of K-State and how they

could fall completely out of the polls in a short amount of time. However, the Wildcats' offense refuses to let the critics take away from the success they have had so far this year.

"Our confidence has stayed the same," Finney said. "Nobody expected us to be 7-1 at this point. We are writing our own future and the guys are remembering that. We are just going to continue to do what we do and hopefully it pans out for us.

BY THE NUMBERS

Key numbers to think of during Saturday's game

-the rank of the Oklahoma State offense when it comes to scoring points

The Cowboys are averaging 49.9 points per game on the season, and have shown an ability to score in any way possible on offense. Quarterback Brandon Weeden has thrown 22 touchdowns on the season and running back Joseph Randle has rushed for 16 touchdowns himself. The Wildcats will be challenged as the Cowboys are more versatile on offense. K-State will not be able to completely shut down the Cowboy offense; they are just too good to do that. Instead, the Wildcats must eliminate the big play and force the Cowboys to move the ball down the field and earn their points.

- the amount of interceptions for Nigel Malone, which ranks second in the

Malone has been a pleasant surprise and a great complementary cornerback to David Garrett. Malone picked off Oklahoma quarterback Landry Jones twice in the first half. On Saturday, Malone will be locked up against Áll-American candidate Justin Blackmon, who is a big receiver and great at using his body to catch the ball. Malone will be thrown at a lot, giving him an opportunity to add to his interception numbers.

16

-the amount of rushing touchdowns for quarterback Collin Klein on the

Klein currently is tied for third in the country with his 16 rushing touchdowns. Klein added two more in the loss to the Oklahoma Sooners. Klein has shown all year that it does not matter how many hits he takes in a game, he is going to get back up and continue to do what he does the best. Klein is especially efficient in the red zone, where he is able to use his size to run through tacklers and get the extra yard for a touchdown. The Cowboys are not very good on defense, as they rank 111th in the country in total yards given up. They have shown the ability to make big plays and force turnovers. If the Wildcats are able to hang on to the ball and play their style of grind-it-out offense, then there is an opportunity for the Wildcats to have success.

123

-the total yards for running back Joseph Randle last year against the Wildcats

As Blackmon was out last year, Randle stepped up huge in the Cowboys' narrow victory over the Wildcats. Randle is kind of the forgotten man in the offense, but he is able to make plays, and this offense is impossible to stop. As tough as Blackmon and Weeden are to stop, the key to slowing down the offense is not to let Randle get going. He can make plays both out of the backfield as well as in the passing game. The K-State defense must wrap up and tackle him when they get the opportunity.

172

- the amount of yards that Justin Blackmon had receiving against the **Baylor Bears**

There was a question as to whether or not Blackmon would play against the Bears as he was injured the week before, but he quickly showed that there was no lingering effect as he went on to have 13 catches for a season high 172 yards. Blackmon is one of the best receivers in America and is Weeden's go-to guy if he needs a completion. Last year, Blackmon sat out the game, as he was suspended for the Cowboys 24-14 victory in Manhattan. This year, Blackmon will look to exploit a Wildcat defense that ranks 103rd in the country against the run. If the Wildcats are not able to get more pressure on Weeden than they did on Jones, it could be a long night in Stillwater for the Wildcats.

-Compiled by Mark Kern

Breaking down the Cowboys

Sean Frye

There is no rest for the weary this week as the No. 14 K-State Wildcats, who are coming off of a 58-17 drubbing at the hands of the Oklahoma Sooners, face the No. 3 Oklahoma State Cowboys in Stillwater, Okla.,

this Saturday.
Standing at 8-0 overall and 5-0 in the Big 12 Conference, the Cowboys are one of just six teams left in the Football Bowl Subdivision with an undefeated record. That list also contains LSU, Alabama, Stanford, Boise State and Houston. So far this year, the Cowboys are outscoring their opponents 399-212, and that includes three games where the Cowboys have won by 30 or more

The Wildcats will be the secondhighest ranked team the Cowboys have faced, following the 1-point victory they earned over then-No. 8 Texas A&M on Sept. 24.

The storyline of the year for the Cowboys has been their offense, which in many ways is a mirror image of the Sooners. Similar to the Landry Jones-Ryan Broyles connection the Wildcats faced last week, the Cowboys' quarterback Brandon Weeden and receiver Justin Blackmon have been in sync all season and will be the primary threat for the Wildcats.

Weeden, who is 28 years old and was once drafted by the New York Yankees, has passed 2,710 yards and 22 touchdowns with just seven interceptions so far this season, three of those coming in the first week of the

season against Louisiana-Lafayette. "He is very poised," said head coach Bill Snyder. "He has a great deal of experience and has been through it. A very cool, calm and collected quarterback. He throws a great ball and he has great confidence, and they work together extremely well."

His favorite target, Blackmon, has

BREAKDOWN | pg. 3

Wildcats look to improve as they take on explosive Cowboy offense



Logan M. Jones | Collegian

K-State defensive back, Tysyn Hartman, fights for a tackle while getting Oklahoma wide receiver, Kenny Stills', hands in his facemask. Hartman and the rest of the K-State defense has the daunting task of trying to slow down Oklahoma State's high powered offense this Saturday in Stillwater.

Corbin McGuire

K-State has used the phrase "sawing wood" many times throughout the season to describe its style of play on the field, but the Wildcats could not have cut through a piece of plywood in their demoralizing loss to Oklahoma last Saturday. The Wildcats lost their first game of the season 58-17, in a game where neither side of ball was

The Wildcats' defense gave up its season-highs in total yards, 690, passing yards, 520, and points. The Sooners put up these numbers despite having more turnovers and penalties and less possession time than the Wildcats. The defense did not record one sack

against the Sooners, something head coach Bill Snyder said he was not sur-

"You cannot really compare when they only give up three sacks the entirety of the season," Snyder said. The adrenaline was running high

before kickoff as the two teams had a confrontation on the field that fired up the players and fans alike. The Sooners took advantage of the intensity and drove 80 yards to score on the first possession of the game. The Sooners, after forcing the Wild-

cats to punt, nearly repeated their first drive as they went 77 yards in less than three minutes to make the score 14-0.

The Wildcat offense eventually succeeded against the Sooner defense by scoring 17 unanswered points, giving the defense the rest it desperately needed. The Sooners, however, got right back on track on their next drive that ended with an 18-yard touchdown pass from Landry Jones to Jaz

A missed field goal by Anthony Cantele and a costly fumble by the Wildcats were all the Sooners needed to secure the momentum going into the second half. The Sooners capitalized on the turnover and kicked a field goal as the first half ended, extending their lead to 23-17.

The second half went badly for the Wildcats. The Sooners scored on their first five possessions of the second half to eventually make the final score 58-

The defense's minor highlight was Nigel Malone's two interceptions, which gives him the second-most interceptions in the Football Championship Subdivision this season.

The Wildcats' schedule will not ease up anytime soon, as the team travels to

DEFENSE | pg. 3

MATCHING UP

Monty Thompson sports editor

K-STATE RUSH OFFENSE VS. **OKLAHOMA STATE RUSH DEFENSE**

K-State is coming off of its first defeat of the season, and struggles on offense were only half of the problem. Fortunately for the Wildcats, the Cowboys don't present near as much of a challenge as the Sooners defensively. Oklahoma State has allowed teams an average of 455.6 yards per game and has difficulty stopping the run. Quarterback Collin Klein and running back John Hubert continue to pick up yards on the ground, and should expect to keep their combined 183-yard average going in Stillwater.



ADVANTAGE: K-STATE

OKLAHOMA STATE PASS OFFENSE VS. **K-STATE PASS DEFENSE**

It is no secret that the secondary for K-State can give up big chunks of yards; just ask Baylor, Texas Tech or Oklahoma. On Saturday, the Wildcats will once again face a team with the ability to light up the skies throwing the ball. The Cowboys are powered by a talented quarterback in Brandon Weeden, who has an arsenal of receivers at his disposal, with four averaging 40 yards or more per game. Junior wide receiver Justin Blackmon leads the team with a whopping 74 catches and a 104-yard receiving average. K-State's secondary will have to step up in a major way if the Wildcats want to leave Stillwater, Okla., with a win.

ADVANTAGE: OKLAHOMA STATE



OKLAHOMA STATE RUSH OFFENSE VS. **K-STATE RUSH DEFENSE**

While the Cowboys might have issues to sort out on defense, Oklahoma State is a juggernaut offensively. Led by sophomore running backs Joseph Randle and Jeremy Smith, the Cowboys average a total of 181.9 yards on the ground and have amassed 25 rushing touchdowns on the season. For K-State, stopping the run has been the most consistent trait of its defense. The Wildcats' linebacking corps, led by Arthur Brown, have done an excellent job at backing up the defensive line, allowing teams just 103 yards per game running the ball.



ADVANTAGE: K-STATE

K-STATE SPECIAL TEAMS VS. **OKLAHOMA STATE SPECIAL TEAMS**

After returning two kicks for touchdowns in two games, Tyler Lockett has earned the respect of opposing special teams units. However, Cowboys return man Justin Gilbert has taken back two kicks of his own and averages 28 yards per return. Both coverage teams have done well against opponents on both punts and kicks. On Saturday, both units will be put to the test on special teams, and starting field position will play a vital role for





ADVANTAGE: NONE

K-STATE PASS OFFENSE VS. **OKLAHOMA STATE PASS DEFENSE**

The Wildcats were held to just 58 yards passing against Oklahoma last week, and although it has never been the strength of the offense, K-State should expect more production this week against the Cowboys. Oklahoma State's defense is led by safety Daytawion Lowe who has put up 58 tackles on the season. While the Cowboys have allowed opponents 270 yards through the air on average, it would be unrealistic to expect K-State to put up those kind of numbers.



ADVANTAGE: OKLAHOMA STATE

INTANGIBLES

The Wildcats will have to bounce back from a loss for the first time this season, and how the team responds from adversity has yet to be determined. On the other hand, Oklahoma State is playing to keep its national title hopes alive. With LSU and Alabama set to face off this weekend, a win for the Cowboys would likely result in a No. 2 ranking. But this game is between two ranked teams as well, and Boone Pickens Stadium will be the most hostile environment that K-State has seen all season.

ADVANTAGE: OKLAHOMA STATE





FINAL SCORE PREDICTION: 42-24 OKLAHOMA STAT









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Weeden breaks mold in football after disappointing baseball career

assistant sports editor

In a sport that is usually determined by guys between 18 and 23 years old, Brandon Weeden sticks out as a 28-year-old quarterback. Weeden's path to a Heisman

candidacy has been a long one. Following his senior year in high school, Weeden was selected in the 2002 Major League baseball draft. The New York Yankess used their second round pick to take the hard throwing pitcher. He never played for the Yankees as he was traded to the Dodgers in 2003 for then All-Star

Once again, he was never able to play in the big leagues and was put in the Rule 5 draft. The Rule 5 draft occurs every December so teams cannot just leave their players in the minors when other teams are willing to put these guys in the majors.

The Kansas City Royals were the team that selected Weeden with the hope that they could get the potential out of Weeden that the Yankees saw when they drafted him in the second round. It turned out baseball was just not in the cards for him when he was forced to quit due to an

However, his sports career was not over as he was offered a scholarship by Mike Gundy and Oklahoma State to play

After sitting out his freshman year, Weeden saw action in one game in 2008. It was not until the next year, though, that he started to show that he might have a future in football.

Filling in for then-starting quarterback Zac Robinson, Weeden led the Cowboys back from a halftime deficit against the Colorado Buffaloes. The game-winning pass was thrown to a then-unknown Justin Blackmon, a preview

of what was to come with this

Last year was when he was finally named the starting the quarterback for the Cowboys. He began to discover his true potential, throwing for a school record 4,277 yards and 32 touchdowns as he led the Cowboys to a record of 11-2. The success of the 2010 season put the Cowboys on the map as national title contenders en-

tering the 2011 season. With all of the pressure of being ranked so high in the preseason, the Cowboys have responded very well.

Entering Saturday's match-up with the Wildcats, Weeden

thus far on the season is well on pace to break the records he set last year. Through eight games, Weeden has thrown for 2,710 yards and 22 touchdowns. However, the most important statistic that Weeden has this season is eight victories and zero losses.

As the Cowboys keep going deeper in the season, the pressure is going to keep building. Head coach Mike Gundy has faith in his quarterback and understands how special Weeden is.

"He's almost like a coach at times. When he made the decision to come back, he and I had a conversation on what we wanted to do with the offense," said Gundy in an interview with Berry Tramel.

Oklahoma State is a legitimate title contender. With the two top ranked teams in action on Saturday, the Cowboys are in position to move into the top two in the rankings, exactly where they want

Without Brandon Weeden, this may have never been possible. His time in professional baseball gave him the opportunity to see how you are supposed to act as a professional, and this shows as he never seems to get rattled when things do not go as planned.

Pass interference



Logan M. Jones | Collegian

Wildcat receiver Chris Harper, junior, draws a pass interference call on Oklahoma linebacker Tony Jefferson, during Saturday's game at Bill Snyder Family Stadium.

BREAKDOWN | Blackmon, Weeden make dangerous combination

Continued from page 1

74 catches for 834 yards and ten touchdowns. He is projected to be one of the top picks in the upcoming 2012 NFL draft.

"They throw it to him, he catches it and runs it to the end zone," Snyder said. "That is just what he does. Some of the best have lined up against him and tried to stop him and have had no success doing it. It is just a matter of, can you do it? He does it."

Overall, the relationship on the field between Weeden and Blackmon has been the primary reason for the Cowboys' success in 2011.

"They work together so well that anytime there is an inkling that they are having a problem, they look and throw the ball out there, I think,"

Snyder said.

As for the Cowboys' defense, the numbers tell two different stories. Currently, the Cowboys are the No. 1 team in the country in turnover margin. However, they also rank 111th in total defense as they give up 455.63

yards per game.
Safety Daytawion Lowe leads the team with 58 tackles, while defensive end Jamie Blatnick leads the Cowboys with seven sacks. Defensive back Brodrick Brown has four interceptions, which is also a team best.

"I think they have grown into the capacity to create so many turnovers, being the No. 1 team in the nation in turnover margin," Snyder said. "They have the most interceptions in the nation as well. They could be playing

equally as well and not have those turnovers, but one fits the other extremely well if you can force turnovers. It is like watching the A&M ballgame. That was a reasonably tight ballgame. A&M had three consecutive turnovers and that was it. That is a big part of their game."

Overall, while the Cowboys' defense does not necessarily replicate the Sooners' defense, both teams are almost identical offensively. Both teams run a no-huddle style of offense, and both teams have a deadly quarterback-wide receiver connection. If K-State can contain Blackmon and take advantage of the Cowboys' weak defense, they will have an excellent opportunity to pull off one of the biggest upsets in college football this

DEFENSE | Team to fix mistakes from last week before tackling Cowboys

Continued from page 1

Stillwater, Okla., to face the No. 3-ranked Oklahoma State Cowboys. The Cowboys' offense, ranked third in the FCS for total yards, may be a bigger handful to stop than the Soon-

Linebacker Jonathan Truman said the team must fix its problems before thinking too much about the Cowboys.

"We have been looking at ur own film from last week. correcting mistakes and working on what our schemes are against them," Truman said.

The Cowboys' quarter-back-receiver duo of Brandon Weeden and Justin Blackmon has been a consistent nightmare for defensive coordinators all season. Weeden has thrown for 22 touchdowns and is completing 71.3 percent of his passes this season. Blackmon has tallied up 834 yards and 10 touchdowns on 74 receptions this season. Snyder said the duo poses a large chal-

lenge for the Wildcats. Snyder said the experience Weeden has been key to the Cowboys' success.

"He throws a great ball and he has a great confidence, and they work extremely well," Snyder said of the duo. "Blackmon is a guy that just finds open areas. It is not a matter of what the routes are, it is a matter of where you are defensively and he gets someplace

Wichita native Randle, the Cowboys' leading rusher, will add to the Wildcats' challenge to stop the Cowboys' high-powered offense.

The Wildcats will look to

bounce back from their first loss of the season on Saturday. The game is set to kickoff at 7 p.m. and will be televised on

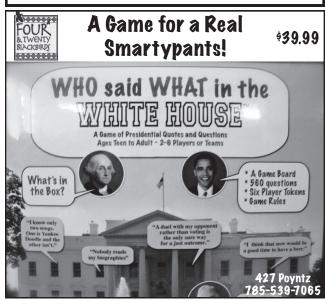
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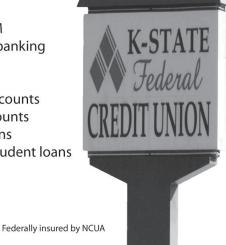
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Games to Watch - SEC showdown pits top two teams in country



LSU@ **ALABAMA**



This game is being dubbed the "Game of the Century." The teams are ranked No. 1 and No. 2 in the country and you can guarantee the Bryant-Denny Stadium will be rocking on Saturday night like it has not in years.

The Tigers enter the game ranked No. 1. On offense, the Tigers like to run the ball to set up the pass. They have two playmakers at receiver in Rueben Randle and Russell Shepard who are capable of big plays. With the return of leading rusher Spencer Ware, the Tigers will look to him to get the Alabama defense to crowd the line of scrimmage, opening up the deep pass for the two speedsters at receivers. As efficient as the Tiger offense is, they are a team that relies on its defense.

A year after losing Patrick Peterson to the NFL, the Tigers may have found an even better cornerback in sophomore Tyrann Mathieu. Mathieu will be back in action as he is coming off a one game suspension and will be leaned upon to help slow down the Crimson Tide's offense.

Alabama is very similar to the LSU offense with regard to the fact that they want to establish the running game first. The difference though, is that they are willing to rely on their running game the entire game if able to. The Crimson Tide is led by Heisman candidate running back Trent Richardson, who has rushed for 962 yards and an outstanding 17 touchdowns. As good as Richardson has been, his backup as has been every bit as impressive. On the season, Eddie Lacy is averaging eight yards per carry, which is almost unheard of. His ability to come in when Richardson needs a breather has made both Richardson and the Crimson Tide offense that much better.

As good as the LSU defense has been this year, the Alabama defense has been better. They lead the country in total defense and points allowed per game. They are led by linebacker Dont'a Hightower, who is the vocal leader of the group. It is not just Hightower though as they have future pros at every single position on the field.

This has all of the makings to be the game of the year, as the winner will be the clear favorite for the SEC West title and be in the driver's seat for the national title. Expect the home-field advantage and the ability of Trent Richardson to break tackles to be the difference in this game and for Alabama to escape with a close victory.



TEXAS A&M @ **OKLAHOMA**



In a game that has been predicted to be huge since the beginning of the season, these two teams enter this week coming off of emotional games. Texas A&M comes into this showdown after a tough loss to the Missouri Tigers.

The Aggies blew a fourth quarter lead and lost in overtime. On offense, the Aggies have the players to compete with the Sooners. Ryan Tannehill at quarterback has proven he is able to make big plays. The Aggies will rely on the running duo of Christine Michael and Cyrus Gray to make big plays and keep the Sooners offense off the field.

The Sooners showed what they are capable of in last week's blowout victory over a very good Kansas State team.

After a dogfight in the first half, the Sooners just blew the doors off the Wildcats as Landry Jones threw for 505 yards. Jones has playmakers all over the field and showed that when he has time he can be lethal.

The Sooners, for whatever reason, always seems to lose a game that they should not. However, when the Sooners are on their game, there may not be a team out there that can beat them. Look for Texas A&M to hang around a while because of their offense, but expect the Sooners to pull away for a comfortable victory.





Even though this game is not getting as much hype as the other SEC game, it has all of the makings to be an instant classic.

The Gamecocks were able to get through their first game in the post-Lattimore era with a victory over the Tennessee Volunteers. Marcus Lattimore was an All-American candidate until he tore ligaments in his knee that has put him on the sideline for the rest of the season.

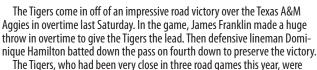
This has forced the team to become more one-dimensional on offense and rely more on the arm of quarterback Connor Shaw. Shaw, who took over after Stephen Garcia got kicked off the team for numerous violations, has stepped in nicely. Shaw is more athletic and able to get out of the pocket and make plays with both his feet and his arm. He still has a great player in receiver Alshon Jeffery, who is able to beat anybody one-on-one. He also has a great defense to lean upon that will help ease the pressure off the offense.

The Razorbacks have recovered nicely since the loss to Alabama last month. They will put a high-powered offense out on the field, led by quarterback Tyler Wilson who threw for 511 yards in a win against Texas A&M earlier

The key is going to be for the offense of South Carolina to keep up with the Razorback offense. As good as South Carolina's defense is, Arkansas' offense is too talented to completely stop. It will be key as Shaw will face his toughest test ever as a starting quarterback.

In the end, the Razorbacks have too much firepower for the Gamecocks, so look for the Razorbacks to get a nice win at home and stay in contention for an SEC title.





finally able to get that marquee road victory. Franklin is starting to become a very good starting quarterback. He has a presence in the pocket where he is not going to be forced out unless he wants

to. It has been the ability to make plays with his arm and feet that is making him tough to stop. Baylor has had trouble this year stopping anybody, so he presents a very difficult challenge.

The Bears are coming off of a 59-24 defeat to the Oklahoma State Cowboys, who destroyed them in every facet of the game. After starting the season off with such promise, the Bears are in dire need of a victory to save their season. Luckily, the Bears have a guy capable of saving their season.

Quarterback Robert Griffin III, despite the defense's struggles, continues to put up incredible numbers. He has plenty of weapons on the outside to continue his success and have a big game.

This game has the makings of a high scoring affair, as has been the case in pretty much every Baylor game. With that being said, look for Baylor to save their season and for Robert Griffin to have a big game.





It is amazing how teams can change from week to week. Only one week after an incredible upset over then No. 3 Oklahoma, Texas Tech came out at home and got walloped 41-7 by an unranked lowa State team

The Red Raiders came out flat against the Cyclones as the normally explosive offensive was nearly non-existent. Seth Doege, who torched the Sooners the week before, completed only 50 percent of his passes and 171 yards. He threw two interceptions as the Red Raiders never were able to get on track. They must play much better as they travel to Austin to face the Texas Longhorns.

Texas is back to playing smash-mouth football, behind the legs of freshman running back Malcolm Brown. Brown carried the ball 28 times for 119 yards and two touchdowns in the blowout victory over the Kansas Jayhawks. It has been a key for the Longhorns to continue running the ball effectively as the two young quarterbacks continue to get adjusted to the college level.

Texas Tech has adjusted well to adversity, so expect them to play much better in Austin. However, the Longhorns have established the running game, and that will help keep the Red Raider offense off the field. Expect a close game and the Longhorns, behind Brown, to squeak out a close victory.

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